

# MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT

TO THE

RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

OF THE

BARNSTAPLE UNION,

FOR THE YEAR 1922.

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Barnstaple :

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*Bear Street,*

*Barnstaple,*

*April 6th, 1923.*

*To the Chairman and Members of the  
Barnstaple Rural District Council.*

*Gentlemen,*

*I beg to forward you my Annual Report for  
the year 1922, and again wish to draw your special  
notice to the lack of an Isolation Hospital.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*J. R. HARPER,*

*Medical Officer of Health.*



1922.

# ANNUAL REPORT

## OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

### For the Rural District of Barnstaple.

#### 1. GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area (acres)	...	...	...	...	129,768.
Population (estimated to the middle of June, 1922)					17,980.
Number of Inhabited Houses			...	...	
Number of Families or Separate Occupiers				...	
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	£147,621.
Sum represented by a 1d. Rate			...		£434 16s 7d.

#### 2. EXTRACTS FROM THE VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR.

			Total.	M.	F.
<b>Births.</b>	Legitimate	...	301	164	137
	Illegitimate	...	21	12	9
			—	—	—
			322	176	146

Birth Rate (per 1,000) 17·90.

			Total.	M.	F.
<b>Deaths.</b>	...	...	242	117	125.

Death Rate (per 1,000) 13·45

Number of Women dying in, or in consequence of, child birth :

(a) from Sepsis, 0. (b) from other causes, 1.

Deaths of Infants under 1 year of age :

Legitimate	...	...	17
Illegitimate	...	...	1
			—
Total	...		18

Three of these deaths were the result of Premature Birth.  
 Infant Mortality death rate, 53·4 per 1,000 births.

Deaths from Measles (all ages)	...	...	...	0
„ „ Whooping Cough (all ages)	...	...	...	1
„ „ Diarrhœa (under 2 years of age)	...	...	...	1

### 3. NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR.

The following table shews the number and age distribution of the cases notified : --

			1 to 5 years.	5 to 15 years.	15 to 25 years.	25 and over	Total.
Scarlet Fever ...	...	...	...	10	1	1	12
Diphtheria ...	...	...	...	2	...	...	2
Erysipelas ...	...	...	...	1	1	5	7
Pneumonia ...	...	...	1	1	8	15	20
Cerebro-spinal ...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1
Ophthalmia Neonatorum			1	...	...	...	1
							<hr/> 43

It is satisfactory to note the small number of cases notified during the year. There were no fatal cases. The 12 cases of Scarlet Fever were distributed over the district and not confined to any particular area. The Diphtheria cases were not severe, and the case of Cerebro-Meningitis, which occurred in the Challacombe parish, left no bad result and was treated at home. The number of cases of Pneumonia does not call for special comment.

### TUBERCULOSIS.

#### 1. Total cases notified, 47.

(a) Pulmonary.	Males	...	28
	Females	...	16
	Total	...	<hr/> 44
(b) Non-Pulmonary.	Males	...	3
	Females	...	0
	Total	...	<hr/> 3

Of these 3 died during the current year and 7 were admitted to hospital for treatment.

## 2. Age Periods :—

Between 1 and 5 years	...	...	1
„ 5 and 15 „	...	...	9
„ 15 and 25 „	...	...	14
„ 25 and 45 „	...	...	16
„ 45 and 65 „	...	...	5
„ 65 and over	...	...	2
			—
Total	...		47

## 3. Organs affected :—

Lungs, 44 ; Peritoneum, 1 ; Spine, 2.

4. The disease was distributed amongst the following occupations :—Domestic Servants, 8 ; Housewives, 6 ; Labourers, 5 ; Masons, 3 ; Fitters, 1 ; Clerks, 3 ; Farmers, 2 ; Trained Nurses, 1 ; Carpenters, 1 ; Blacksmith, 1 ; Gamekeeper, 1.

5. The cases were notified from the following Parishes :—

Westdown, 6 ; Morthoe, 6 ; Braunton, 4 ; Westleigh, 4 ; Combemartin, 4 ; Fremington, 4 ; Instow, 2 ; Landkey, 2 ; Georgeham, 2 ; Swimbridge, 2 ; Tawstock, 2 ; Bishopstawton, 2 ; and single cases from Sherwill, Woolacombe, Atherington, East Down and Horwood.

## DEATHS FROM TUBERCULOSIS.

The deaths registered as belonging to this district amount to 24.

They were divided as follows —Pulmonary, 22 , Non-Pulmonary, 4.

Deaths from Tuberculosis occurred in the following parishes :—

Instow, 4 ; Morthoe, 3 ; Westdown, 3 ; Combemartin 2 ; and single cases from Tawstock, Fremington, Marwood, Braunton, Eastdown, Wrafton, Horwood, Westleigh, Brendon and Swimbridge.

## 4. CAUSES OF SICKNESS.

The past year has again been a most satisfactory one in regard to the general health and the prevalence of infectious disease.

Influenza was fairly widely prevalent, but did not show any increased virulence over that of last year. There were 4 deaths.

Pneumonia in all forms caused 26 deaths, Cancer 20 and Heart Disease 33 deaths.

There have been outbreaks of Whooping Cough, Chickenpox, and Scabies amongst the Schools. Challacombe and Atherington suffering especially from Whooping Cough.

## **5. SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.**

### **Staff.**

The two Sanitary Inspectors, Messrs. Ackland and Dean, divide the district equally between them. They are two very experienced officers and have a thorough knowledge of the district and their duties. Their reports are included.

### **Professional Nursing in the Home.**

A further increase in the number of District Nurses is to be noted. Braunton has recently acquired the services of one and there is every reason to expect that other parishes will do the same.

Wherever they have been introduced their services have been much valued.

### **Midwives.**

The Local Midwives are under the control and supervision of the County Council. There are 14 distributed through the district

### **Clinics and Treatment Centres**

The Tuberculosis and Venereal Clinics are established in the Borough of Barnstaple.

### **Hospitals Available for the District.**

1. Infectious. There is no Hospital accommodation for the ordinary Infectious Diseases. For the treatment of Small-pox this authority has an arrangement with the Barnstaple Urban District Council by which they jointly share and have in readiness tents, hospital equipment, and a site which latter fulfils the requirements laid down by the Local Government Board.



2. Tuberculosis. The Hawley and Hawkmoor Sanatoria receive most of the cases requiring isolation and special treatment.
3. North Devon Infirmary. This Hospital is available for Medical and Surgical cases and serves a wide area. It has accommodation for about 80 beds. It admits maternity cases requiring operative interference or special treatment.
4. Barnstaple and North Devon Dispensary. This Institution has a large out-patient department.

#### **Bakehouses.**

The Bakehouses in the district are fourteen in number. They have been periodically inspected and found satisfactory.

#### **Slaughterhouses.**

New Bye-laws have been adopted during the year with respect to Slaughterhouses. The old Bye-laws only applied to certain parishes, but the new regulations are applicable to the whole district. One of the new Bye-laws enforced the use of a mechanically operated instrument for the stunning of cattle, and these humane killers are now being used by the butchers throughout the district.

The seventeen Licensed Slaughterhouses have been regularly inspected. One notice to carry out certain structural alterations was served and the requirements of the notice were complied with. All the premises are kept in a satisfactory condition. Two carcasses were found affected with generalized Tuberculosis and were voluntarily surrendered and destroyed.

#### **Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops.**

This branch of work is being thoroughly revised under the Milk and Dairies Amendment Act, 1922. A considerable quantity of milk is exported from the district into the surrounding towns. The majority of the premises where the trade of Cowkeeper or Dairyman is carried on are fairly satisfactory, but more attention to cleanliness should be given by persons milking and distributing the milk.

## **Disinfection.**

Thirty-three houses have been disinfected after cases of Infectious Disease. Three lots of bedding and clothing were sent to the Barnstaple Town Disinfecting Station for steam disinfection.

## **SEWERS AND DRAINS.**

### **Instow.**

The Instow sewer was extended along the Back Road to take the drainage of six New Houses.

### **Braunton.**

A portion of the Braunton sewer was diverted at Mill Stile to cut out an acute angle in the sewer which was a frequent point of chokage, and to give a better fall towards the outfall.

Thirty-eight new drains have been laid for the drainage of new buildings and twenty-three old drains have been repaired. The Smoke or Water Test has been applied to all these drains before they have been covered up.

### **New Buildings.**

Thirty-four new dwelling houses have been completed fit for human habitation during the year in the following parishes :—

Atherington	...	...	...	1
Bishop's Tawton	...	...	...	2
Braunton	...	...	...	6
Combe Martin	...	...	...	2
Fremington	...	...	...	1
Georgeham	...	...	...	3
Goodleigh	...	...	...	1
Instow	...	...	...	3
Landkey	...	...	...	4
Morte Hoe	...	...	...	5
Pilton West	...	...	...	2
Tawstock	...	...	...	4

## HOUSING.

Number of New Houses erected during the year :—

(a) Total	...	...	...	...	84
(b) As part of a municipal housing scheme	...	...	...	...	Nil

### 1. Unfit Dwelling Houses.

Inspection—(1). Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) ... 308

(2). Number of dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910 ... 110

(3). Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ... 2

(4). Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ... 115

### 2. Remedy of Defects without Service of Formal Notices.

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers ... 90

### 3. Action under Statutory Powers.

#### A. Proceedings under Section 28 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1919.

(1). Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs ... 1

(2). Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit .. ...

(a) by owners ... 1

(b) by Local Authority ... Nil

(3). Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close ... 1

## B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

(1). Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	...	...	...	...	83
(2). Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied	...	...	...	...	
(a) by owners	...	...	...	...	71
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners	..	Nil			

## C. Proceedings under Sections 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1909.

(1). Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders	...	...	1
(2). Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made	...	...	1
(3). Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling-houses having been rendered fit	...	...	Nil
(4). Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	...	...	Nil
(5). Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	...	...	Nil

## LABORATORY WORK.

The Public Health Department of the Devon County Council have made provision for any Bacteriological Examinations that may be necessary, and advantage is fully taken of this by the Medical men of the area.

## LOCAL ACTS OR GENERAL ADOPTIVE ACTS.

(a) Urban powers are in force in regard to the following parishes :—

**Morthoe.** For the removal of house refuse, the watering and cleansing of the streets, and bye-laws with regard to bathing.

**Instow.** For removal of house refuse.

**Braunton.** For the removal of house refuse, cleansing and watering of the streets.

**Combemartin.** For the cleansing and watering of the streets and for the removal of house refuse.

**Countisbury.** For the removal of house refuse.

(b) Bye-laws for the better supervision of slaughterhouses apply to the following parishes :—Berrynarbor, Bishop's-tawton, Bratton Fleming, Braunton, Combemartin, Countisbury, Fremington, Georgeham, Instow, Landkey, Morthoe, Marwood, Parracombe, Swimbridge, and Tawstock.

(c) The Dairies, Cowsheds and Milk Shops Order, 1885, refers to the entire district.

(d) Part 3 of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890.

(e) Part 4 of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1907.

## CAUSES OF DEATH DURING THE YEAR 1922.

Causes of Death.	Males.	Females.
Whooping Cough ... ..	1	...
Influenza ... ..	3	1
Tuberculosis of respiratory system ...	9	11
Other Tuberculous Diseases ... ..	2	2
Cancer, malignant disease ... ..	5	15
Rheumatic Fever ... ..	1	...
Diabetes ... ..	...	2
Cerebral Hæmorrhage, &c. ... ..	7	11
Heart Disease ... ..	12	21
Arterio-sclerosis ... ..	9	7
Bronchitis ... ..	6	3
Pneumonia (all forms) ... ..	13	13
Other respiratory diseases ... ..	2	2
Diarrhœa, &c. (under 2 years) ... ..	2	2
Acute and Chronic Nephritis ... ..	4	2
Other accidents and diseases of Pregnancy and Parturition ... ..	...	1
Congenital Debility and Malformation, Premature Birth ... ..	7	2
Suicide ... ..	2	..
Other Deaths from Violence ... ..	9	3
Other Defined Diseases ... ..	22	26
Causes ill-defined or unknown .. ..	1	1
 All Causes ... ..	 117	 125

J. R. HARPER,

Medical Officer of Health Barnstaple Rural District Council,

April 5th, 1923.



